L'exemplaire filmé fut reproduit grâce à la générosité de:

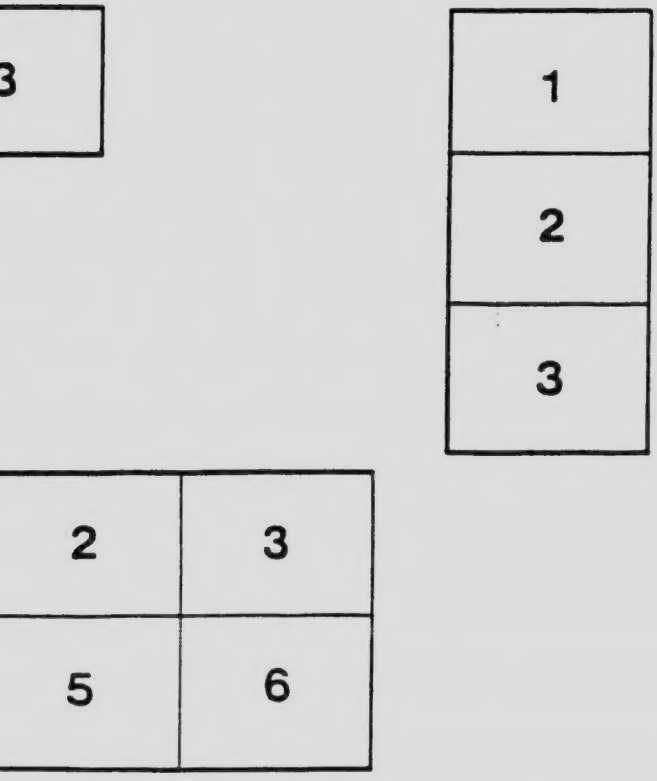
British Columbia Archives and Records Service.

Les images suivantes ont été reproduites avec le plus grand soin, compte tenu de la condition et de la netteté de l'exemplaire filmé, et en conformité avec les conditions du contrat de filmage.

Les exemplaires originaux dont la couverture en papier est imprimée sont filmés en commençant par le premier plat et en terminant soit par la dernière page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration, soit par le second plat, selon le cas. Tous les autres exemplaires originaux sont filmés en commençant par la première page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration et en terminant par la dernière page qui comporte une telle empreinte.

Un des symboles suivants apparaîtra sur la dernière image de chaque microfiche, selon le cas: le symbole → signifie "A SUIVRE", le symbole ▽ signifie "FIN".

Les cartes, planches, tableaux, etc., peuvent être filmés à des taux de réduction différents. Lorsque le document est trop grand pour être reproduit en un seul cliché, il est filmé à partir de l'angle supérieur gauche, de gauche à droite, et de haut en bas, en prenant le nombre d'images nécessaire. Les diagrammes suivants illustrent la méthode.



# PAPER

READ BY

## B. R. ATKINS, ESQ.

CHAIRMAN, REVELSTOKE BRANCH,
NAVY LEAGUE OF CANADA

AT THE

## First Annual Conference of the British Columbia Division Navy League of Canada

HELD IN

VICTORIA, B. C., JUNE 25-26
1918

VICTORIA, B. C.
THE COLONIST PRESSES

L834-2197

# PAPER READ BY B. R. ATKINS, Esq.

**Chairman, Revelstoke Branch, Navy League of Canada**

ONE could talk or tell for hours of the pride and prowess of Britain's Fleet and the glorious bravery of its men; of what it has prevented by the enemy and done for our Allies and ourselves; how it saved France from ruin and loss of all her colonial empire; how it has swept the yellow-black flag from the seven seas, and delivered our own Dominions from devastating destruction of their seaport cities; how it has kept open for succour and commerce the sea-lanes of supply to Motherland and her Allies in Europe, kept the enemy's grand fleet in grander inactivity, and bottled up its harbours and ports with useless shipping. And all this, all the while without official observer to chronicle the daily devotion and unfaltering heroism which overcame (sometimes without survivor even to relate the occurrence) the horrible terrors of mine strewn seas; of torpedo and bomb attack from the sky above—and from the waters under the earth. No superman sailor; only a British Tar! On watch, but not alas, for a fair foe on an open sea; Falkland, Jutland settled that! Jack is but the big "cop" of the sea; convoying the little fellows over the crossing, preventing collisions with death if even with danger to himself, keeping the peace for them even in war, and feeding through them the mouths of munitioners, the maws of gluttonous guns, and keeping tight our Tommy's tummy belt—a way Tommy likes to feel it.

Since the war opened not a single German battleship has put out to sea—nothing has been accomplished but baby raids. Von Spee was out before the issue was joined; after Falkland he could not get back. Germany's vainglorious fleet has fulfilled none of its vaunted, pompous purposes. It has not been able to protect its country's shipping, nor save German sea-trade from strangulation, nor defend its colonies from capture. The Germans have relinquished all advantages of the sea without a struggle—although they claimed, and still claim, on paper, to have as much right to it as we.

### Mare Liberum

(Henry Van Dyke, in the "Times," New York).

You dare to say with perjured lips:
  "We fight to make the ocean free"—
You whose black trail of butchered ships
  Bestrews the bed of every sea
Where German submarines have wrought
Their horrors! Have you never thought—
  What you call freedom, men call piracy?

Unnumbered ghosts that haunt the wave,
  Where you have murdered, cry you down;
And seamen whom you would not save
  Weave now in weed-grown depths a crown
Of shame for your imperious head:
A dark memorial of the dead
  Women and children whom you left to drown.

Nay, not till thieves are set to guard
  The gold, and corsairs called to keep
O'er peaceful commerce watch and ward,
  And wolves to herd the helpless sheep,
Shall men and women look to thee,
Thou ruthless Old Man of the Sea,
  To safeguard law and freedom on the deep!

In nobler breeds we put our trust:
The nations in whose sacred lore
The "ought" stands out above the "must,"
And honour rules in peace and war.
With these we hold in soul and heart,
With these we choose our lot and part—
Till liberty is safe on sea and shore.

We are there on trust! In peace and in war we will keep there, with Honesty and Honour and Freedom as our triple-crossed flag; with our blue-jacket Jack to act as "cop"—"To safeguard law and freedom on the deep."

We can, I think, safely commit the trust to him. He has not been fed on dream diet—taking his morning hate with his coffee, his mid-day boast with his beer, and his evening frightfulness with his frankfurter. Despite the "Der Tag!" drinks, the foe hasn't come to combat from his mine covered canal corner. Bravery is no by-product of the brewery; common sense no creation of conceit; fun no child of frightfulness. Plain, sensible, humorous and brave, we can as safely trust Jack in the future as in the past; in peace as in war, to be fair to a foe, gentle to the unfortunate, cool and sensible in duty and brave in every danger. The Sea is his "beat," and while he is Keeping Watch, the house of freedom is safe from burglary and piracy.

The flag he flies under is Red with his blood; is Blue with the blueness of the seas he keeps free; and white as his stainless record for bravery, mercy and devotion to duty. Flag of the free; should ever alien hands tear it down, this free life, this free land, would be at an end; and there is not a free man, a free land anywhere that would not suffer. For a thousand years it has braved battle and breeze, that not only should its people be free but that that blessing should be mankind's. It is not true there are no stains on it, we are but human; but it is true that this flag of a thousand years is the noblest friend of mankind, humanity, the world has ever seen. It has flown in the van from barbarism to civilization. It has cleansed the world from many a blot and sent blood-stained powers of tainted sceptre and crown crashing into dust. A Nation's final victory never comes; it is always coming, while ever the end is Liberty. So our flag flies out of the ages into years to come. It knows no Time, present or future. It is always in the sun somewhere—it is always battling, flying for freedom. Lift it high! Masthead high! in the wind that blows to Berlin. It will fly there, too. Never believe it won't. While ever we believe that right makes might; that Magistracy is a solemn trust of Justice; that the quality of mercy is mightiest in the Mightiest; that it is "not by might and by power but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts" we battle and struggle on; so long shall the meteor flag of England terrific burn:

"Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return."

Clad in such an uniform, with such instructions, we may safely leave the freedom of the seas in the hands of our British Tars. He will be keeping watch there, whatever the peril, "however long the vigil, till Liberty is safe on sea and shore."

Though one could talk, and have I not, at length of the glories of our Navy, men and ships, it is not of it and them I wanted chiefly to speak. The anthem I want to sing, the theme I want to pursue, the hymn I want to raise is that of the British Merchant Seaman. And had I the tongue and the voice of genius it would fail to adequately express the admiration and gratitude of half a world's people, the heartfelt grief and joyful thanks of your own for your noble sacrifices and enduring bravery in the awful maelstrom of war.

What has a Merchant Seaman to do with War? While at no period of history was he free of its dangers, yet, in past Christian times, a shot across his bows, a search, a prize crew, and probably diversion to a port other than that bound for, was the worst he had to fear. In respect to life and limb, food and drink, he was not seriously the worse for the experience. But now, in this day and year of grace, in this cycle of civilization, he may be shelled without warning; blown to fragments by mine or torpedo; sent adrift in an open boat to starve or freeze, or act as a target for his murderers, as chance, or their whim, may determine. The wonder is that he has decided to suffer these things, to take these risks, when he might very well have refused; and by that noble decision he accomplished the salvation of mankind from ruthless tyranny and unrestrained frightfulness, the while being himself its greatest victim. It was upon him and his kith of the sea from Allied and neutral shores, that the shuddering, shameful submarine scheme was waged without warning, with ferocity and in defiance of law, order or humanity. Destruction of the Merchantman was the method of the submarine to bring Britain to starvation, where she might accept a Prussian peace. But to carry it to death and torture of the Merchant Seaman, of innocent passengers and helpless women and children, was passing the bounds of even barbarism. It could no more be excused than the rape of Belgium. The result was the same. In the first place Britain, in the second, America, went into the scrap with all their might to crush such shameful philosophy and free the world from such arrogant breaking of its peace, order and laws. And, like the Belgian, our A.B. went into it, too, for all he was worth; and is still at it, despite the frightfulness of the enemy and the terrible toll he has paid and will pay. And with him is all his kin of fishermen, trawlers and mine-sweepers, and his kith of the other Atlantic Coast. Sea-dog, top-dog!—A.B. and Master Mariner—you, with your thousands of ships without convoy which daily cross the seas to loving, calling Homeland and her Allies, are the biggest, greatest barrier between Germany's most exalted dreams and their fulfilment. You will, of all men, lead the way in bringing to just destruction the schemes of those who have taken so many "Nots" out of the Ten Commandments. "Nots" are awkward to people planning murder, rape, arson and piracy; and even Divine law it seems must be improved upon plea of Military necessity and a war, termed biologically just. Survival of the fittest let it be. God is still in Heaven. Mine, torpedo, submarine are not his greatest instruments of survival. There is no sting in death to the spirit of the brave—fighting, working for freedom. There is a Spirit in it that frightfulness cannot kill, nor danger of death quench. "Honour the brave, the brave that are no more," and honour, I pray, the brave that are continuing, with British doggedness and American spirit, to still sail and steam the trackless ocean and its war zone death traps with their argosies of victory!

No flight of imagination, no effort of rhetoric, is necessary to tell us that—not a soldier, not a gun nor shell, in any zone of the Allies' struggle, but is and must be carried by these seamen and their ships. We could not maintain the struggle for a week but for them. There is no need for figures, the fact is paramount.

No one who knows the past history of the Merchant Service will, for a moment, suggest that gratitude for past favours from a grateful country (anywhere) summoned these men to face these fearful perils, or perform this unselfish duty. We loaded them in times of peace with no benefits or honours; rather, we treated them as outside the pale of special consideration; and left them and their food, wages and life-risk conditions to the mercies—not always, if ever, tender—of an over-stocked, open labour market, and rapacious, profiteering owners. Are we now, when peerless in their sacrifice and courage,

we realize their quality and devotion, doing better by them? Are we attempting to express by other means than phrase of praise, our recognition of their worth to our Empire, our Allies, to a world fighting for freedom? Always, and even now I am afraid, the veriest drudge of commerce, he still keeps his wheel, his watch and his course in the spirit of his fathers for the glory of his country, with the hope of victory, and for the world wide furtherance of freedom. My panegyrics are at an end. If they are deserved, they point a moral, sustain a sequel.

I am a member of the Navy League of Canada, to help in every way I can to foster the seafaring profession or calling, and improve the lot of seafaring men in Canada. I have been there myself—just a little—and all the sympathies I have with the sailor have been increased a thousand fold by his heroism and devotion in this war. We must all love Jack for it, but we must do more. Love is not a passive quality—it implies action; it means sacrifice—service. He has made it, is giving it. What are we doing in return; what can we do? And, are we doing all we can? Especially, are we doing all we can at the time it is most needed, in this crisis of war? There will not again occur such an opportunity in this generation, nor in others for some time, I trust, when we can and should requite the Sailor for his devotion and heroism; and use his example and our best sympathetic and enthusiastic effort to popularize his calling. What is the use of "education"—our Navy League's first plank—if it does not show more regard and reward for noble sacrifice than words of rhetorical praise; what present use, if it does not man our ships with fit men of our own race to replace loss, maintain this titanic struggle to the end of victory, and continue in our peace as Mistress of the Sea? If we talk of sea-power, ships and men, as being the mainstay of our Empire, we must and do remember that it was never so necessary to maintain as now. Ships are vital. The number of ships we, and America, can send will control the number of soldiers we can send. We cannot support more men than we can feed.

What's the good of crying "greater production" if we cannot get it "over there?" Our success is not to be measured by what we can grow or create here, in the U.S., or in the United Kingdom, but by what we can get across to the war fronts and zones. All this is admitted.

But the case and circumstances carry us further. Ships cannot be put into the care of incompetent and inexperienced crews, if even of the kidney and spirit of our race. A match struck in the submarine zone at night against orders might occasion the loss of crew and ship and all of her "greater production" cargo. Lazy or inefficient firemen might occasion the same catastrophe. The submarine is watching for lights and laggards. Every ship carrying a win-the-war cargo should be efficiently officered and manned, and should not, I think, be considered as private property in war time. She is as much "military resources" as an ammunition train. Do we run ammunition trains as a private enterprise with a profit string attached? Why expose our greater production effort; our volunteer and drafted soldier service; our food conservation scheme; our whole national patriotic policy of win-the-war assistance to such risks and chances? Why have a policy, a plan, for everything but the Sea Service and the Seaman? Is it not the time of all times, with the glorious self-sacrificing example before the nation and the world of our Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine, to insist that the day of requitement is here; that today is the day for a policy which will invite and recruit for the Sea, to hold the power we have there. The foundation must be laid now on a basis of discipline, good pay and educative assistance to promotion.

What a disgrace to Canada is the publication of such a news item as this:

## CHINESE SAILORS TO MAN VESSELS

### Scarcity of White Seamen Leaves No Alternative for I.M.B.

"Victoria, May 17—Lack of white seamen on this coast has forced the British authorities to arrange for the manning of the Imperial Munitions Board's wooden steamships by Chinese crews. This course was not decided upon until every means possible had been exhausted in an effort to secure white sailors for duty on deck and in the engine room. The scarcity of seamen on the North Pacific coast has developed into a very serious problem. A contingent of Chinese firemen and deck hands have already reached here from Hong Kong, and the crew of the War Yukon have been signed on and are now aboard the ship. The Fernie Line of Liverpool, which will operate the first six wooden ships completed, have sent their officers from the United Kingdom.

"Captain R. M. Milestone will command the War Yukon; Capt. C. King will take over the command of the War Nootka, and Capt. John Thompson has been assigned to the War Songhees."—Province, May 17, 1918.

---

Masterless and manless ships! No policy, no plan to train them. Chinese and Japanese have captured our Pacific Coast fishing—the finest field for recruiting trained seamen in every country; and now in this hour and time of Empire stress we import Chinese crews to man Imperial Munition Board ships. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Navy League of Canada should go out of commission tomorrow, hand back its warrant, if it makes no protest against such a crime against British tradition and Imperial interest; if it does not commence here and now, in Victoria, B.C., to frame and demand a constructive policy of Government and Governments—and failing them, the People—that will prevent such a stinging shame to men and women of the British race in Canada. It is no excuse that our men are all in the Army. It is no policy, ladies and gentlemen, that will make them all soldiers and create no sailors to carry food to them. The Chinese may be very brave men, but I prefer to trust our food, our munitions, our ships, to men of my own race when they enter the submarine zones and the choice is fight or desert the ship. It is no policy, I repeat, that risks all other national effort of the fight for freedom with an absence of plan or management when it puts out to sea. I think we have in this illustration (and maybe you know of others), a leverage and opportunity to knock at the doors of Parliament demanding an adequate and dependable sea policy which will protect and improve our war aims and efforts, and invite at the same time the youth of our country to maintain it for peace afterwards. I see little hope of educational progress for our League with the youth and in the schools of our country with such an illustration of our seafaring inefficiency before them; without the introduction of a policy that will open for them a new profession, a new calling, on lines that will invite and induce them to enter it.

May I here draw your attention to the advertisement on the board behind me? It is taken from the Saturday Evening Post of June 8, 1918. It is issued at instruction of the United States Government, it is paid for by a business firm whose stores that Government are using for information bureau and recruiting offices for the U.S. Merchant Service. The U.S. Shipping Board are authorized by Congress to build One Thousand and Ten Ships. The ships are sure but their manning is not. For this are wanted ten thousand trained

officers and 50,000 men. This advertisement is one call for them. It does not call for Chinese sailors or firemen. It calls for American youths and men. It does not insist on experienced men—it offers to **train** them for their work. It offers good wages, good board and uniform, healthy life, coast cruises, good beds and plenty of recreation and amusement. Opportunity is promised for advancement and saving of money. Enrollment exempts from all military service. A large bonus is offered if the ship is called into the war zone. Furthermore, you can make your job permanent after the war, and can fit yourself for an officer's position.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the United States expects to have a trained Mercantile Marine during and after the war. They are not leaving things to chance or mischance. Are we, descendants in a direct line, thank God, of Raleigh, Frobisher, Drake, Grenville, Rodney, Nelson; of the same race and of the same breed as Jellicoe, Beatty, Tyrwhitt and Fryatt, and a thousand like them, to be content with Chinese crews. No educational propaganda flourishes on such a record; no national future for sea power or influence is conceivable in the case; no field of usefulness exists for the Navy League of Canada but to succour the brave and relieve the distressed **Seamen**, and their families, of the Motherland and other lands, our Allies in this struggle for Liberty.

## TO THE MERCHANT SAILORS [FROM THE TRENCHES]

To you—to you,
  Gentlemen all, so brave,
  Who sail the restless wave,
O'er waters deep and blue,
  We, from the trenches, and the bloody mire,
  Ere (it may be to-morrow!) we expire,
Send greetings true.

Ye guess not, as ye go,
Groping in darkness slow,
  Or free before the wind,
Where the grim shade may wait
That holds the key of Fate,
  What doom ye find:
  But your unconquerable mind,
Dauntlessly scorning threat of mine and shell,
Sweeping past death and hell,
Follows what path duty's clear star may show.

The low door is not far from any feet
Here where the world's ways meet,
  Where all roads merge towards eternity,
Yet, though we die to-night,
The thought of you makes bright
  The shadow that awaits us silently.
For, though the years be tired, the passing long,
Since first our island breed grew strong,
  And sailed through all the portways of the earth,
Beating up every strait,
Through every ocean gate
And o'er the seas that widened to the stars,
  Chasing the flying sun through death and birth,
The old flag on our spars,
Still warms the blood with the brave pulse it had,
  Throbs with the ancient laughter,
Battle-glad—

Be whose fore or after,
This let them know,
On our sea-tracks we go,
Whate'er they say;
Our fathers' deathless might
Won us that right,
The freedom of the seas till Judgment Day.

We hear your witness to the eternal truth
We hail the proofs of your undying youth.
Who go in ships before all winds that be,
Who, even when death assails you on the waves,
Go fearless through the deep. Still from your graves
Ye hold the sea.
When, out of hell, broke the black brood of Night,
Plunging the world in fear, ye knew no dread
To hungry hearts that prayed for morning's light
Ye brought their daily bread,
Kept the doors open, looking o'er the brine,
Held firm for Freedom hope's long battle line,
Dragged the rich trawl of glittering treasure home
Over the deadly foam;
Said to the nations, "Follow where we go
Share this our right, wherever oceans flow,
By tide and wave."
And with your lives ye pledged the word ye gave.

All hail, all hail,
Ye gentlemen of honour, who do sail,
Life-bringers to us all, in trench and town.
While men shall not forget,
While truth is living yet,
The glory of your name can ne'er go down.

LAUCHLAN MACLEAN WATT, C.F.

"Somewhere in France"

Ladies and Gentlemen, heart spoke to heart there, kind to kind, breed to breed. Can you imagine it written to and of Chinese crews? Is all the wealth of history and tradition and heroism in its glowing expression, to be lost to the youth of Canada; and are we, only, not to have a share in its glorious praise? The time is now, the day is here, to make the effort of our lives for the establishment on generous principles of a national sea power policy for Canada, and the training and instructions of its youth, that they may "carry on" in the tradition of our fathers in the way that made them great, and play their part in war and peace for the great glory of themselves and their Country, and to the honour of the Empire and Flag.

I beg to move that the Committee of Resolutions prepare and present to this Convention of the B.C. Division of the Navy League of Canada, a resolution urging immediate attention of the Government of Canada to the necessity of at once formulating a policy ensuring for all Naval and Mercantile Marine requirements of Canada, an efficient, trained and adequate supply of officers and men, with the aim that we may the further and better protect and extend our Country's sympathies and interests in this war; with the object of retaining such men in the Service of the Sea after the war, and with the end that as British subjects and loyal lieges we may share now and hereafter in the glory of history that has made the seas secure in peace and war by the bravery and devotion of British Seamen.